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Woman's

1680

1902

**Historical Sketch**

...of the...

**Woman's Foreign  
Missionary Society**

...of the...

**Presbyterian Church**

**Philadelphia, Pa.**

**501 Witherspoon Building**

## HISTORICAL SKETCH.

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TERRITORY—Synods of Atlantic, Baltimore, Catawba, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Tennessee.

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THIS Society originated in a quickening of conscience on the part of a few Christian women in Philadelphia. There was no pressure from without, no call from the Board of Foreign Missions, but the Holy Spirit moved upon their hearts, until they felt that they could have no rest to their souls until an organized effort was begun by Presbyterian women for the salvation of their heathen sisters. At this time the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions had in its service twenty-two unmarried lady Missionaries, and eighteen or twenty native women as Bible-readers or Visitors. In the fall of 1869, a lady connected with the Woman's Union Missionary Society, asked another Presbyterian lady, "Why do not Presbyterian women have such a Society of their own?" The question sank into her heart, for she had from childhood loved the cause of Missions, and after much prayer and thought, it resulted in several ladies and pastors being called upon and the subject presented to them. Some doubted, others welcomed the suggestion, and a few earnest women gladly

shared these early efforts, aiding by words written and spoken, the object in view; while one who was intimately identified with the movement from the first, probably gave it its present shape, by urging that the approval of the Board of Foreign Missions should be secured. After several informal preliminary meetings a Constitution was drafted in May, 1870, was submitted to the Board of Foreign Missions, and returned, approved by them, in the following June. On October 4th, of the same year (1870) the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society was formally organized. As a matter of historical interest, the names of the first officers are given :—*President*, Mrs. W. E. Schenck ; *Vice-Presidents*, Mrs. Z. M. Humphrey, Mrs. D. A. Cunningham, Mrs. E. P. Wilson, Mrs. William Strong ; *Recording Secretary*, Mrs. H. D. Gregory ; *Foreign Corresponding Secretary*, Mrs. M. B. Grier ; *Home Corresponding Secretary*, Mrs. S. C. Perkins ; *Treasurer*, Mrs. J. D. McCord ; and a Board of twenty Managers. Large numbers of circulars and personal letters were at once sent throughout the entire Church. Speedy and cordial responses from all parts of the country, proved that a work of preparation had been quietly going on in many hearts.

On April 27, 1871, the first Annual Meeting was held, six months after organization, in the

Lecture Room of Calvary Church, and the following results were reported : Thirty-seven Auxiliaries, twelve of which had each assumed the support of a Missionary ; twenty-five Mission Bands ; fifteen Missionaries, under the care of the Society—and in money, \$5,244.96. During the same month WOMAN'S WORK FOR WOMAN was begun, and with the July number it became the joint publication of this Society and the Woman's Presbyterian Board of Missions of the Northwest. It was at first a quarterly, with a subscription list of five hundred names ; *price fifty cents per annum.*

In *May*, 1871, the General Assembly gave its hearty sanction to the work of this Society, using, among others, the following words : " They are pushing the work of organization and kindling the fires of Christian fervor in all parts of the Church. \* \* \* The General Assembly recognizes the hand of God and the spirit of pious consecration and prayer in this whole movement."

In *March*, 1872, WOMAN'S WORK became a bi-monthly, and a room for office purposes was kindly granted us at 1334 Chestnut Street by the Board of Publication.

Among the plans adopted in this year was that of Presbyterianial organization, which has proved so efficient an arm of the Society; also

the Sabbath afternoon hour of prayer, from five to six o'clock.

In 1874, a monthly prayer meeting was established, and is still held on the third Tuesday of each month, at 11 A. M.

In *March*, 1875, WOMAN'S WORK became a monthly; its subscription list, of nearly ten thousand, seeming to warrant the advance step.

In *January*, 1876, CHILDREN'S WORK FOR CHILDREN was begun, as a monthly. In April, 1879, it became the organ of all the Women's Foreign Missionary organizations of the Presbyterian Church, under the auspices of the Board of Foreign Missions. With the January number of 1894, the union of Home and Foreign Missions in the magazine was begun, and the name changed to "OVER SEA AND LAND."

In order to be able to hold property, and to fully establish the organization, a charter was obtained early in 1883.

In 1885, under a new agreement with the other Societies and Boards, for the purpose of territorial adjustment, our Society recommended its organizations in New York State to transfer their connection to the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions, New York.

In *December*, 1885, WOMAN'S WORK, so long published at 1334 Chestnut Street, Philadel-

phia, was transferred to New York City, and is now published at 156 Fifth Avenue, New York, as the organ of all the Women's Foreign Missionary organizations of the Presbyterian Church.

In *May*, 1902, the general summary was as follows: Presbyterian Societies, 55; Auxiliaries, 1,645; Bands and Sunday-schools, 953; Y. P. S. C. E., 1,073; Y. P. S. C. E., Jr., and intermediate, 328. Missionaries supported, 188 inclusive of 21 new Missionaries supported by Y. P. S. C. E. Boarding Schools (whole or in part) 35; Day Schools, 108.

In 1897, by arrangement with the Assembly's Board, Sunday-school work was transferred to that Board, and Christian Endeavor work all committed to the women's boards.

The total amount of money raised by this Society in its thirty-two years of existence has been \$3,786,274.72.



Price 1 cent; 10 cents per dozen.